



Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2021-2022

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked by **MS LEANNE CASTLEY MLA** on 8 November 2022:

Reference: CHS annual report 2021-22 page 150

In relation to: Radiation therapy

Continuing from previous radiation therapy questions relating to strategies outlined in CHSFOI21-22.35

- 1) How many patients “allocated time” was changed after implementing these strategies for
 - a. radical
 - b. palliative
 - c. emergency.
- 2) What services were normally reserved for radiation oncology services and how did implementing these strategies affect these reserved services? Did these services still receive treatment? If so, were their hours reduced? When was maintenance carried out for the machines? How long does maintenance take and was it carried out as frequently after implementing the strategies as it was before?
- 3) How many patients were referred to private radiation oncology providers? Did CHS cover this cost?

MINISTER STEPHEN-SMITH MLA: The answer to the Member’s question is as follows:

- 1) It is not possible to determine the number of patients that had their allocated appointment times changed. Each patient’s allocated appointment time is continually reviewed throughout a patient’s treatment as part of routine business to ensure the treatment schedules are optimised for maximum throughput of patients.

- 2) Maintenance (service) for each linear accelerator is conducted quarterly on weekends by the vendor. Following each maintenance service, the Radiation Physics team perform quality assurance checks to ensure the linear accelerators are functioning as expected and safely prior to recommencing patient treatments. Previously, following each service, an entire day was allocated to these quality assurance checks and other important development work. This quality assurance and development work was moved outside of clinical hours in negotiation with the Radiation Physics team to accommodate the treatment of more patients. As a result of this initiative, the linear accelerators are serviced at the same frequency and duration, and the same degree of post-service quality assurance was conducted by the Radiation Physics team.
- 3) A total of 11 patients were referred. Six of those requested their care be transferred to ICON and covered their own expenses for this service. Five were referred by Canberra Health Services (CHS) due the unexpected breakdown of equipment required for the Stereotactic Radiosurgery service and had their treatment costs fully covered by CHS.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Signature:



Date: 12/1/23

By the Minister for Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA